Lab deploys sensor in support of debate

by Francis L. Crumb, Information Directorate

ROME, N.Y. — The National Institute of Justice's CyberScience Lab (CSL), in collaboration with the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) Information Directorate, co-located at the AFRL Rome Research Site, successfully tested the Wireless Intrusion Detection Sensor (WIDS) in support of the first 2004 Presidential Debate.

The Sept. 30 deployment to University of Miami's Coral Gables Campus marked the second phase of testing for the WIDS system under the CSL's technology transfer initiative. The first field test took place during June and July, supporting the Utica Police Department.

The WIDS program was originally developed under an Information Directorate contract with Cole Innovations of Rome for Air Force wireless networks. Paul Ratazzi, Information Directorate senior engineer and WIDS program director, described the system as a low-cost solution that gives network managers insight into activity of their wireless networks.

"WIDS can be tailored to monitor policy compliance, detect attacks and incursions in real time and is easily interfaced with common network management tools," Mr. Ratazzi said. "It provides access to information not available on the wired networks and alleviates the need for network administrators to conduct labor-intensive manual monitoring of the wireless environment."

The University of Miami is one of the largest wireless campuses in America. The university staff worked with the CSL team prior to, and during the presidential debate, in the deployment of WIDS. This joint effort enhanced the administration and monitoring of the debate's wireless network. The CSL team used WIDS to watch for unauthorized wireless access and assisted in ensuring the networks stability and integrity for all of the debate's attendees. @